

Preface

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It is a pleasure to deliver the third volume of the Project Report on an Oasis-region (PRO), which we started publishing roughly two years ago. We have published in last March a special publication “Hanhai Cangmang” which means a vast arid desert extending in the northwestern China. We plan to publish an issue, also as a special publication, compiling a talk given in April, 2002, by Professor SUGIYAMA, Masaaki on the brief history of the region. It includes series of compiled color maps of the Heihe Basin at different eras in the last 2000 years, created based on the Chinese Historical Folio. This would be coming soon.

Looking up the past volumes of PRO, we would realize the evolution of the publication. Earlier issues contain mostly reports introducing the specialties of the participants in the project, and those to let the others know how each participant would be contributing to the project, in order to understand the participants each other. The following issues of PRO include many review type papers, introducing the knowledge obtained so far, related with the project. With further evolution of the project, varieties of questions came out, which people do know even who to ask, because the question is related with quite different fields of study from ones of those who raised the question. On every Wednesday, hence, we started having, in the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, the Wednesday Seminar, where a special guest researcher was appointed to answer particular questions. The seminar was so frequent, however, that all the participants in the project were difficult to attend every seminar, except those who are associated with the institute. The series of lectures to answer each question was, therefore, published in PRO for those who were not able to attend the seminar. This type of report is included in this issue as well, in which, however, original outcomes of the project are also included. It is exciting that our outcome becomes appearing in recent issues, indicating that many would follow. This would encourage implementing the plan that we would have a symposium in China in next year to discuss our results with Chinese colleagues.